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AUTHOR Goldman, Leroy H.
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ABSTRACT

Community service programs in the junior college, a relatively new area of interest and attention, are growing rapidly and are expanding. One area that has not received much emphasis concerns community involvement in the institution. The author presents an overview of existing community service programs, in addition to interviews conducted at seven California junior colleges regarding community services and community involvement. There was an attempt to explore a method of community involvement that can be used as a model at other institutions. The Educational Participation in Communities (EPIC) program at Los Angeles City College, California, is reviewed in detail. A student volunteer program designed to involve students in the solution of urban problems, this is an outgrowth of a desire of students, faculty, and individuals from the community who are interested in a genuine, positive program of community involvement to aid young people from less privileged homes. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (MC)

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

A New Approach to Community Services
Through Community Involvement

A Seminar Paper

Submitted in Partial Satisfaction of the
Requirements for Education 441 D

by

Leroy Howard Goldman

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Problem

The area of community services is relatively new in the community college. Even though the community services program is rapidly growing and expanding, it is felt that there is an important area of concern that has not received the emphasis that it should. This area concerns community involvement.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore a method of community involvement that this writer feels is not only important but will develop as a model for others to follow.

Method

In this paper an over-view of community services programs will be presented. This coupled with interviews conducted at seven community colleges regarding community services and community involvement will be utilized to construct the background for and identify trends and actual programs that exist.

A NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SERVICES THROUGH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Thornton has stated that there are six purposes of the community college. These six purposes include programs in 1) occupational education of post-high school level; 2) general education; 3) transfer education; 4) part-time education; 5) community services; and 6) counseling and guidance (17:67).

Each of Thornton's six areas is quite important, and according to several writers in the area each is essential.

This seminar paper will examine only one of these areas--community services--and attempt to define community involvement and the types of programs that would fall into that category.

The community services program in the community college is relatively new. Even though it is recent in development, much emphasis has been placed upon its value. Bogue has stated that the junior college is a community-centered institution with a primary function of providing community services (1: 21). Medsker has written that an institution cannot be in a community for any length of time without becoming sensitive to the community and feeling an obligation and challenge to serve (10: 78). While both Bogue and Medsker have made

strong statements, Thornton seems to go even further. He states that the function of community services is the most recent development of the tasks of the community junior college. Nevertheless, the scope and adequacy of these services determine whether or not the college merits the title of "community" junior college; to an important degree, they also determine the extent of community understanding and support of the several functions of the college (17:67).

Apparently many of the noted authorities feel that the importance of the community services program is quite substantial. The role of the community college is to serve all community members (2: 90). It is felt that as long as this major role is being fulfilled, the college will have support from the community.

Unlike the secondary and elementary schools, the community college is able to provide something for everyone. Harlacher points out that 40 to 60 per cent of adults do not have school age children (6:15). This means that in order to continue to have wide spread support for the college, there must be programs that will arouse general community interest and provide a wide range of opportunities to participate.

Not only is the community services program a means of involving the community, it is an excellent means of initiating a strong public relations program. When

citizens are able to see evidence of the college providing an education for young people, involving itself in community problems, and offering a wide range of activities for the entire community, it is difficult to attack that image. By providing services of quality for the community, the community hopefully will react favorably when the college needs aid.

To better understand the community services program and community involvement, it is important to take a brief look at the major sectors of the program.

Community Development and Self Improvement

Community development is the joining together of the college and the community in order to attack unsolved problems (16:145). This is a logical extension of college-community interaction and citizen participation (5:18).

Community development has been defined as the "process of community education and action democratically organized and carried through by people themselves to reach goals they hold in common for the improvement and enrichment of the entire community" (9:14). Reynolds states that major emphasis should be placed on the educational needs of the community and that when this occurs, there will be a residue of educational services over and above instruction. It is this residue that creates the community services program (16:145). When this is coupled with programs tied directly to community

needs, the community development phase of community services is formed.

Public education presently has the function of community improvement. The degree with which schools satisfy this function has not as yet been determined. Schools must be closely attuned to the lives of the people they serve (13:iv). The community school's role in community development is 1) to promote a sense of community; 2) to acquaint students with their community; 3) to assist the community in identifying problem areas; 4) to gather and disseminate information needed to solve community problems; and 5) to expedite and help coordinate efforts toward community improvement (12:15).

In recent years, the community college has started to demonstrate its interest in participating in efforts to improve the community. This effort seems to be growing rapidly, for at many of the community colleges that this writer visited, the statement was made that the community services program definitely was beginning to point in that direction.

According to Harlacher, the role of the community college is that of a catalyst in community development. The college makes available to the community its resources of knowledge and skills, but leaves decision making

in local affairs to the citizens (5:19). Harlacher goes on to say that the community college must cooperate with study and planning agencies by 1) helping to bring findings and plans to the attention of the public and securing enlightened discussion of them; 2) have the college staff and students assist in making community studies and trying out community plans; and 3) educating the people of the community to put into effect proposals which have been accepted after widespread discussion (4:29).

Community development and self improvement possibly might include in its methodology research and planning; studies, surveys, and polls; workshops and institutes; advisory assistance by college personnel; and organization of community councils and coordinating councils (5:20).

The Community College as a Community Center

Since the enactment of the Civic Center Act of 1917, the public schools have been utilized as a meeting place not only for the community but also for special interest groups. The community college being part of the public school system is also included in this legislation. In spite of the availability of the physical plant in the community services program, in many instances utilization is often neglected (11:378).

It has been stated that the measure of a successful

community college is the extent to which the community makes full use of its facilities (15:208). Taxpayers and school officials recognize that it is poor economy to let expensive facilities stand idle when classes are not in session. The general feeling is that facilities should be utilized throughout the year for community activities as long as there is no interference with the educational program of the college. This is the spirit of the Civic Center Act.

The facilities of the college cannot simply be thrown open to the public. Care should be taken to inform the public of availability and regulations set forth by law. According to Harlacher, the first step is to make known to community groups that they are welcome to use the facilities, for lack of information is one of the major reasons that facilities are not used (14:207).

In metropolitan areas community use of community college facilities is especially important because few community facilities are available. Often there is a disintegration of civic groups because of lack of a convenient and inexpensive gathering place.

Menefee suggests that the open door policy of the community college should apply also to community services in order to accomplish three objectives: 1) to provide part of the solution for an urgent community need;

2) to guarantee that available facilities are used to fullest advantage; and 3) to acquaint area residents with the community college through first hand experience and interaction with the college (11:390).

College Sponsored Program of Cultural, Educational, and Recreational Services

This program includes public events and cultural activities, such as public affairs lectures and forums, fine arts series, exhibits, film series, college-community music and theatre groups, literary teas, and children's theatre; community recreation programs; athletic events, faculty and student speakers, and program bureau; and other special events such as workshops, seminars, and lectures to meet the needs of business, industry, and the professions (5:22).

Often special college facilities such as planetariums, museums or science centers are used in programs designed for elementary and secondary students of the community in addition to the general community services program.

The Community as a Resource for the College

Just as the community is able to utilize the services and facilities of the college, the college too is able to utilize community resources for its benefit. The college may schedule field trips to museums or galleries, businesses and industries, city and county

governmental agencies, etc. Harlacher states that utilization of the community for studies, surveys, and polls; joint programs with business and government, such as business-education day, education-business day, career programs, students in government; the participation of community leaders in the school program as speakers and resource persons for classes and school organizations are a few of the activities that might be included in this sector of the community services program (5:23).

Interpretation of the College Program

This sector probably fits best into the areas of public relations or public information. It is true that the entire community services program may be interpreted as a public relations program by some because of the positive values that are inherent in informing the public and providing services for them.

Without a continuous and effective program of education and interpretation directed toward the community, the objectives of the college cannot be realized (3:513).

Intelligent public support and participation depends upon a well informed public. Support of an institution is usually in direct proportion to what the public knows about the institution (5:24).

A major problem that community colleges have is

that of having to compete with other public services and agencies for tax dollars. Education is constantly the largest and costliest function of state and local government (18:). Problems have been resulting where the public does not wish to pay more for education. One of the reasons may be because the public does not know what their dollars are buying and that because of misinformation or actual occurrences feel that the schools are not spending funds wisely or economically.

Today there has been a general loss of confidence in public education. A strong, honest public information campaign might be able to regain public confidence.

Kindred states:

Failure of school boards and administrations to supply the people with accurate and understandable information to establish communication, or to give them a part in the educational and financial planning has been responsible for the inadequate support of public education (7:30).

The previous discussion relates the community services program in general to the total educational picture. But a very important and newly emerging area is not included; that area being community involvement.

It is possible that community involvement may be categorized in the community development and self improvement sector of community services. However, programs that presently exist at most community colleges do not go into the depth that would truly be necessary for a

program of community involvement.

Many schools attempt to approach community involvement through two methods. First, the college utilizes student volunteers to work with a community agency for a specific purpose. An example of this might be a college that has a few volunteers aiding a local elementary school in order to up-grade the reading program by giving extra attention and help to those students who are having difficulty.

A second common approach to community involvement utilized by community colleges is through staff utilization. Many colleges encourage faculty members and administrators to offer their expertise to the community. They often sit on civic committees, offer recommendations, lecture to groups, or act as consultants to the community.

Los Angeles City College has a new and far reaching approach to community involvement. It is called the Educational Participation in Communities Program--EPIC. The balance of this paper will be devoted to a discussion and analysis of this program.

The EPIC program began in 1966 at California State College, Los Angeles. The initiation of the program came from the desire of students, faculty, and individuals from the community interested in a genuine, positive program of community involvement aimed at aiding

young people from less privileged homes. Those interested parties wrote a proposal stating aims and seeking funds and submitted it to the Office of Economic Opportunities. The proposal was approved and Cal State L.A. received a grant of \$111,000.

The Cal State L.A. program received approval from state agencies too. In fact, in a general explanation of EPIC, the Cal State EPIC group described themselves as a community involvement program financially supported by the Coordinating Council for Higher Education in California, the Associated Students of Cal State L.A., and the California State Colleges.

The first year of operation was successful. In fact, the Cal State EPIC group wished to see how a pilot program would function at another institution. Los Angeles City College was selected for the pilot program and an EPIC program was set up with a \$3,000 budget provided by Cal State L.A.

With the selection of a staff at Los Angeles City College, a drive was conducted to obtain more funds for operations. The student body donated an additional \$600 to set the total operating budget for the 1967-1968 year at \$3,600.

The EPIC program states in its basic position statement that it is a student volunteer program designed to involve students in the solution of urban problems.

Student volunteers have worked and do work at the American Indian Center, Los Angeles County Probation Department, Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, Department of Social Services, Project Head Start, and in a few of the Los Angeles City Schools. The volunteers primarily work as laboratory assistants in animal research, tutors in ghetto schools, teacher aides in the Head Start program, Big Brothers to youngsters on probation, social worker aides, etc.

Each volunteer receives orientation and in-service training. There are no college class credits given for those involved in the program. The EPIC staff has found that students who are genuinely interested in the aims of EPIC do volunteer to work in the program in various capacities without tangible rewards.

During the first year of operation at Los Angeles City College, the EPIC directors listed as major accomplishments:

1. The generous publicity provided by the campus newspaper made students aware of EPIC and its purposes.
2. Campus organizations supported EPIC in various activities and thereby contributed to EPIC's success.
3. Approximately 140 students made application to EPIC.
4. Approximately 90 volunteers were placed in

agencies. The volunteers have received a wider understanding of their community and its problems and have contributed to the solutions of problems.

5. The student body is more aware of community needs.

6. EPIC has provided clubs and organizations with a center of information for service projects (19).

In addition to a list of accomplishment, self evaluations and recommendations were submitted to Cal State regarding the on going program. The recommendations were:

1. Orientations be provided for all volunteers and that no volunteer be placed without previous orientation.
2. Monthly student coordinator reports should be submitted to the director.
3. All agencies will be visited by respective student coordinators and contacted each month by the student coordinator to obtain information concerning the progress of the EPIC programs and the volunteers.
4. Follow up procedures will be maintained to keep records of any problems with agencies or volunteers.
5. Staff meeting should be held once a week (19).

The staff evaluated the EPIC program at the end of the first year as being very successful. However, in order for the program to continue and expand it was necessary to seek additional funds.

EPIC approached the Student Council for temporary financial assistance for one semester and received aid. Toward the end of the semester, EPIC approached the Board of Trustees to seek funds to carry on the program. The Board of Trustees finally approved EPIC's request with a budget of \$22,600.

Since its inception at Los Angeles City College in September of 1967, EPIC has developed a volunteer service program which has emphasized the practical application of pre-professional training and individual involvement within the community.

Participating in programs tailored to the respective needs of certain areas within the city known as community agencies, EPIC volunteers function in a wide range of capacities. Some of the agencies and the type of work performed are:

1. American Indian Welfare House
Job exploration, office workers, tutoring, recreation leaders.
2. Cedars of Lebanon Hospital
Animal research laboratory assistant, nurses aides, transportation aides, pediatrics.
3. Department of Public Social Services
Companion aides, case worker aides, transportation aides, Share-A-Trip, tutors, family aides.

4. Project Head Start
Teacher's aides, adult high school equivalency test aides, teachers for student initiated classes.
5. Gateway Psychiatric Hospital
Electric shock treatment aides, psychological testing, ward nurse, recreation.
6. Tutorial Project
One to one tutors, small group tutors, half to entire classroom tutorial aides.

An EPIC newsletter states that it is continuously trying to emphasize that EPIC is not a club, but rather an organization open to any student who is interested in the idea of self-help. EPIC feels that it is a much more rewarding experience to serve than to simply give lip service.

As the EPIC program grew and developed, the directors began to feel that there was too much structuring of volunteer services. It was felt that the program was being used by some agencies not in the true spirit of intent. Volunteers were quite limited in contact with people in some instances and were being utilized as clerks.

This prompted the EPIC directors to re-examine their approach to community involvement and assess whether the intent of the program was in a structured setting. The directors determined that the purpose of EPIC would be better suited in as unstructured a manner as possible. Since the volunteers would be

able to be of more benefit to the community in an unstructured situation. However, those volunteers who had specific skill areas and wished to pursue them could operate in a more highly structured setting. An outgrowth of this was the EPIC Aliso Project.

Aliso Village is a housing project in East Los Angeles made up primarily of Brown and Black citizens. The EPIC Aliso project takes student volunteers into the area and works with the children on a one to one or group basis. The primary purpose is to build a relationship between child and volunteer and create a healthy outlook on life. By aiding the children, it is hoped that they will gain an understanding of themselves, others, the community, and keep from getting into trouble.

The curious thing about the EPIC Aliso project is that even though it is open to all children in the village, the program consists primarily of Blacks. The EPIC director seems to feel that perhaps closer family ties and pride among the Browns have limited the number of children in that ethnic group from participating.

The people in Aliso Village are quite pleased with the program and the results thus far.

At the present time EPIC has had many requests for volunteer workers from areas near those being served.

Unfortunately there are not enough volunteers to serve all requests and some are simply too far away from the college to allow student volunteers the mobility they need. However, if a few volunteers wish to propose a project of particular interest to themselves and they are able to secure approval from the directors, that project will be incorporated into the program.

EPIC has recently submitted a proposal to the California Legislature for \$120,773 under provisions of Senate Bill 164. This bill sets up opportunity programs and services for community colleges to provide encouragement directed to enrollment of students handicapped by language, social, and economic disadvantages.

In the proposal it is stated that the direction of EPIC is to help college students relate to community needs.

The legislature is further advised in the EPIC request that since the program began in 1967 as a pilot program of the Cal State L.A. program, the enthusiasm of both the college and community participants has been above expectations.

EPIC is now one of the major programs supported by the community services budget, and with the exception of the directors, is strictly a volunteer program.

In the proposal for funds under Senate Bill 164, EPIC outlined its future goals and proposed program.

The content of the proposal states:that:

Goals (long term)

EPIC's goals have expanded during the two years of its successful operation at Los Angeles City College and that the program can be aided through Senate Bill 164, thereby strengthening and improving it for even greater effectiveness. An integral part of the total Los Angeles City College's proposed minority student aid program is the opportunity for employment. Current long-range goals are listed below; in all cases, the term "community" refers to off-campus, low-income groups of persons geographically bound to one another.

Employment

To provide community-oriented employment for 100 students handicapped by language, social, and economic disadvantages.

Education

To relate college students' formal educational experiences to relevant educational experiences in the community.

Service

To aid community agencies and projects in providing better service to the people they serve.

Cooperation

To increase the communication between college and community.

Model

To provide a model program for other junior colleges, colleges, and universities, which are similarly located in the midst of a large urban area containing a high percentage of minority and low-income people.

Objectives (short term)

Employment

The Director of Research at Los Angeles City College, stated that, "Major stated reasons for withdrawal for both men and women, and for both 1967 and 1968 are related to finances." Two out of the three major reasons given by students for leaving college cited lack of funds.

Placement Office records show that part time employment for students is primarily unskilled.

If part-time educationally relevant employment were available for minority students, it can be assumed that the educational process would be more effective for these students.

It is proposed that 100 students will be paid \$2.00 per hour. This will be arranged by the EPIC office with community agencies or projects with a maximum of 20 hours of work on the job per student.

Education

Agencies and projects have provided volunteer college students the opportunities to work with and learn from people in the community in a variety of ways. Students tutor elementary school students, aid nursery school teachers in the classrooms, counsel junior high school students, conduct recreation programs in housing projects, and more. EPIC then, in conjunction with community agencies and groups, provides students the opportunities to develop educational, psychological, and organizational skills.

If funds were provided through Senate Bill 164, students who could not economically afford to do volunteer work in the community would be able to take advantage of the educational benefits offered through EPIC.

Service

It is generally accepted that social agencies and projects are understaffed and that the ratio of professionals to people served is out of proportion. Adequately-trained college students supplement the efforts of these professionals, thereby providing better and more individual service to community people in need of services. Furthermore, these students, because of their individual backgrounds, relate most successfully with the day-to-day problems of community people having economic, language and social disadvantages.

Therefore, paid community aides, working at a community agency or project 20 hours per week on a regular basis would provide more time for training which would result in a continuity of service and personnel.

Cooperation

As a result of the increased continuity of service and personnel, there will be additional direct and personal exchange between the college and community via student involvement at the request of community agencies. College resources will be better interpreted by EPIC workers than previously and, therefore, utilized to a greater extent by the community. In turn, the college will benefit by additional input from the community re: its values and needs.

Model

A written description and evaluation of this project will be distributed to other educational institutions within the state.

Activities to be undertaken to accomplish the purpose:

Administration of the program

The new dimension of EPIC that SB164 would provide, i.e. a force of paid community aides, would be incorporated within the present structure of the EPIC program which is maintained by an eight member staff.

Program selection

Increased program selection will be based jointly upon the number and types of agencies and projects and the pool of students qualified to assist with each particular program. Programs having first priority would be those toward helping youths and young adults in the economically-deprived communities.

Existing programs could easily be expanded through the EPIC program. An expansion of the program would be to include new fields of work experience. Because of the increase in requests for volunteers, coupled with the requests of agencies to have the college students more time at the agencies to which they are assigned, it is felt that 20 hours a week would be adequate for students to work part time. The students will ideally be placed in positions where they would operate as para-professionals and would not only gain experience but lend their backgrounds to the agencies.

More minority students would participate as community aides because of their knowledge of the communities being served in the economically deprived areas.

Recruitment and selection of community aides

All student recruitment is managed through the EPIC office. This enables each potential volunteer to review all the program possibilities and to apply for that program which interests him most.

The recruitment of volunteers through this central office enables the volunteers to see the scope of EPIC and to identify as members of an overall coordinated effort.

The extended portion of the EPIC program that would provide 100 students with money for working an average of 20 hours per week is the new concept. The EPIC office would act as a clearing house to match students, who must have financial aid in order to stay in college, with a relevant and meaningful job. Offering employment through the EPIC program will free students from work which has no relationship to their education.

A selection committee consisting of two students, a community agency representative, an individual from the community, and the EPIC Director would select 100 students to serve as community aides on the basis of their abilities to relate to minority problems, expressed interest in the community and the degree of their language, social, and economic handicaps. Some allowance will also be made for students with special skills and interests which contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program.

Orientation and in-service training

Various members of the college faculty and staff plus representatives from various community agencies will conduct formal orientation programs with the student volunteers before they are placed in the community.

The topics are geared to background information about the community and its residents, various techniques that might be useful in working with the economically deprived individuals, and other information pertinent to particular projects.

The placement of volunteers is entirely dependent upon the volunteer's interests, his experience, and the needs of community projects.

As soon as the volunteer has been assigned to an EPIC project, he begins an in-service training program with the staff. Small group discussion techniques are utilized for the training, thus bringing together several inexperienced volunteers with an experienced volunteer and a faculty consultant or resource person. Community aides would receive the same training and orientation offered for volunteers.

A new feature of the program will be to invite consultants to address the staff, as well as the community volunteers and community aides, on specific topics in order to improve their effectiveness.

Performance of service

Los Angeles City College students are volunteering their time in agencies and projects throughout the college community. The range of needs being fulfilled reflects a wide diversity of student and community interests and is limited only by the amount of time the volunteer can afford to give.

The potential of an expanded EPIC program can be fully realized when 100 college students are employed in jobs which meet both the community and individual needs.

The following methods will be used to evaluate achievement of goals and objectives cited.

Employment

A comparison will be made by the Office of Research at Los Angeles City College using standard research practices to determine whether the 100 students employed under the EPIC program are still in college at the completion of the semester in greater percentage than 100 other students of a comparable control group.

Education

Questionnaires will be answered by the volunteers and community aides; they will be used by the EPIC staff in evaluating student effectiveness in their respective agencies and programs. Teacher and community agency observations, volunteer and community aide reports and observations and the reactions of the people receiving aid themselves would also tend to form a picture of assessment.

Service

Questionnaires will be answered by community agencies and projects personnel. These questionnaires will evaluate student participation and agency effectiveness.

These questionnaires will also help the EPIC staff to determine what changes are necessary concerning projects and agencies as well as techniques.

Cooperation

One aspect of the questionnaires sent to agencies will be a section asking if the college has proven to be of more benefit to the community prior to the program's involvement in the community.

Model

One year following the mailing of the written description of the EPIC volunteer and community aide program, a follow-up letter of inquiry will be sent to colleges and universities to determine if any similar program has been influenced by this description (8).

The EPIC directors seem to feel quite confident that their request for funds will be approved.

During an interview with the EPIC Director, Mrs. Virginia Kushner, questions were asked related to the proposed program from the standpoint as to whether the program might become so massive as to be difficult to coordinate or whether having paid students working in the program might result in less enthusiasm among the other volunteers. She stated that these were items that she and her staff considered but felt that with a thorough screening process those pitfalls mentioned would be avoided.

The problem that presently exists is that a high percentage of volunteers are not of the ethnic communities being aided. Presently many are from middle class Jewish background. These volunteers are doing an excellent job in general but it is felt that it is also necessary to place volunteers in the area of the same ethnic background as those being served. Unfortunately most of the students that fall into this category and who would like to donate time cannot afford to do so. Therefore, it is hoped that by being able to pay some of the people in the program who need financial assistance an even closer tie may be realized with those communities being served.

The lone question that this writer has at this point is whether there will be conflict and possible disintegration of the program resulting from some EPIC workers being paid and other not? This could lead to a real point of contention. But then perhaps EPIC may be attempting to form a community involvement group made up strictly of ethnic minorities with the exception of those so dedicated that they are willing to offer their services voluntarily while the remainder of the staff is paid.

It is this writer's feeling that the type of program that EPIC operates is the future direction of community

services and community involvement. This seems to be the case, since it was stated that even though other titles are given to community involvement projects, similar programs do exist in other large urban centers.

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